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## ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION.

Baron Nordenskiöld, the well-known

explorer, whose journey across Green-

land has made him famous, now pro-

poses to undertake an expedition to the

Antarctic regions which will occupy the

summer season of 1891. This region re-

mains practically unexplored. A South

Polar winter is supposed to be much

more severe than an Arctic winter, but

since no man has ever spent the winter

months in the South Polar Sea, the

facts in the case have never been prop-

erly collated. Evidently it will be in-

teresting to compare meteorological ob-

servations near the North with those

taken near the South pole.

We often speak of the antipodes.

There are many allusions in contem-

porary literature indicating not only

striking comparisons but contrasts in

regard to the conditions of life and

manners in northern and southern lat-

itudes. These conditions have never

been given out relative to the South

Frigid Zone have a certain color of un-

certainty. They are, however, sufficient

to stimulate the imagination and to fire

the desire of the adventurous, but not

enough to satisfy the natural and

proper thirst for knowledge regard-

ing human progress and the phenomena

of the physical world for which this

century is distinguished.

The only expedition of any conse-

quence in this direction was that of the

Challenger, which accomplished no

more than to penetrate the field of

Antarctic ice. Nordenskiöld believes

that he can make that field reveal its

secrets. He thinks that a sledge party

can cross Victoria Land and approach

the South Pole to ascertain whether the

earth's axis revolves on pivots that at

the South, as at the North, are covered

by eternal glaciers.

There is no question that from Nor-

denskiöld the best results may be ex-

pected. He is not only an experienced

traveler, but he is a Polar explorer of

the highest rank. It is not known that

in the far southern latitudes man or

quadruped has ever existed and infor-

mation is wanting on that suggestion

as to the distribution of the mammal

tribes of animals. The phenomena of

volcanoes and icebergs in such close

proximity as that which is possibly dis-

coverable in that southern world is not

only worthy of observation, but also of

careful investigation and report.

## WORSE THAN FATALISM.

It is too bad for belief. Men are di-

minishing in height. We used to go to

theology for all the kinds of knowledge

which could not otherwise be ascer-

tained. But in this occult field science

has been a ruthless intruder.

A Frenchman has been investigating

men's stature at different periods. He

has not only brought his discoveries

within the regions of history and

poetry, but he has also brought them

within the range of science.

Arithmetical calculation based upon

indubitable facts is not enough for a

Frenchman. This particular statistician

has not only explored the past of the

human race, but he prognosticates its

future and has determined when the

race will finally disappear.

In 1610 the average height of men

was five feet nine inches. In 1790 it

had dwindled to five feet and six inches.

In 1820 it was five feet five inches, and

at the present time it is asserted to be

five feet three inches.

Founding his calculation on these

data this French mathematician figures

that men were originally thirteen feet

and nine inches tall. In Charlemagne's

time they had been brought down to

nearly nine feet, which was still a very

respectable stature and which amaz-

ingly helps to account for the marvel-

ous and redoubtable deeds of the olden

time. But the measurements of later

years quite change this record.

Pursuing his calculations this French-

man shows that, by the inexorable law

of diminution, in the future, the race

will decrease and shorten until adults

will reach only the stature of one foot

and that it will afterward wholly dis-

appear. It must be acknowledged that

this is a bad outlook, but it is no worse

than other and equally unreliable

prophecies.

## RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

The enigmatical personage of Eng-

lish politics at present is Lord Randolph

Churchill. All the other well-known

public men of England have definite

positions and are credited with distinct

and determinate political characters.

Churchill alone is named as a tory and

classed as a radical.

No one who is well-informed would

fight at what is occasionally brought to

light as sensational and erratic in the

course of Labouchere, for example.

Labouchere is aristocratic by family re-

lationship and tradition, radical by na-

ture, accidental circumstances and per-

sonal history, and eccentric both from

choice and the necessities of his pecu-

liar social and political affiliations.

But Churchill is not a similar case. He

has had no past history to be con-

demned. He has formed no dubious al-

liances. If his utterances have not al-

ways been discreet, they involved no

interest of which Lord Randolph was

not the sole guardian.

Lord Churchill is what in this coun-

try we would call an independent. His

relations to Mr. Parnell have always

been of a kind that did credit to his

sense of fairness. On a former occa-

sion it is known that he had a very

close understanding with the Irish

leader. There is no reason, therefore,

why his later defense of the Parnellites

and his arraignment of the Government

in connection with the report of the

Times Commission should occasion

surprise.

Among politicians who are partisans

men like Churchill will be always held

in condemnation. They will not always

act and move as the machine does, and

accordingly, what they say will often

be a surprise and a disappointment.

But, after all, he belongs to a class of

public men who are increasing from

year to year and from whom the re-

forms of the future may be expected.

## THE BATHING MAN.

You know, just how Senator Gor-

man stands in regard to bath reform and

various other things. The *San* hereto-

fore has been an ardent supporter of

the Senator; but this move looks as

though he were losing his grip on the

leadership of the Democratic party in

Maryland, for the *San* invariably seeks

to be on the strong and winning side,

regardless of any other consideration.

It is remarkable how the *San* and*Stars* of newspaperdom shine and

twinkle for revenue only.

THERE is a proposition before the

Ways and Means Committee to increase

the duty on oranges. When Grossmith

was last in this country with *Tosha**Vokes* and appeared in the *Pantomime**Rehearsal*, he used to convulse

audiences by harrowing the stage-man-

ager's soul with such questions as

"Why have fairies?" "Why have

demons?" and now, outside of a play,

the question not unnaturally arises,

Why have a duty on oranges?

## THE SPLENDID WEATHER OF YESTERDAY.

which was general throughout the

country, gave uninterrupted opportunity

for the celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

Irishmen in the main looked worthy of

the weather and the occasion, and they

were doubtless stimulated to the smil-

ing condition in which they everywhere

appeared by the present brightness of

the outlook in Ireland's political history.

## BISMARCK, IT SEEMS, IS NOT A FRIEND

of beer. He says: "Beer drinking

makes men stupid, lazy and worthless.

It is the cause of all the domestic

trouble people men talk over it."

Good corn brandy, he thinks, would be

better. Doubtless the great Chancellor

thinks men would get too drunk on

corn brandy to talk politics or make

trouble of any kind.

## THE HOSTILITY WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN

the *San* and the *World* of New York

is amusing to outsiders. One of them

announced a big fake for his Sunday

edition, whereupon the other ran out an

extra on Saturday afternoon, contain-

ing its fake story of the same thing.

These metropolitan methods are quite in

line with those attributed to the mythi-

cal Arizona *Kicker*.

## THE ELEGIES UPON JUDGE KELLEY'S

character and career all point in one

direction. They indicate a man of fear-

less honesty and positive opinions. It

is not necessary that his every method

and utterance should be agreed with.

But even his enemies will admit that he

had a broad, intellectual grasp which

never belittled the subject on which he

touched.

## ABOUT THE LIVELIEST NEWS ARTICLES

published these days in the Cincinnati

*Commercial Gazette* are the sketches of

the pioneers of the region which lies

between the lakes and the Ohio River.

They are not only interesting reading,

but much safer to publish than forged

contracts under ballot boxes.

## THERE ARE SYMPTOMS GOING TO SHOW

that the diplomatic positions which

American statesmen fill abroad are be-

ginning to be tiresome, especially to

men accustomed to activity in affairs.

The latest instance of a sufferer from

diplomatic ennui is Minister Palmer at

the Court of Spain.

## IN SOME QUARTERS IT IS HELD THAT

the questions before the House Com-

mittee on Elections are merely matters of

arithmetic and counting, and it is even

hinted that the members of that com-

mittee are not all experts in computa-

tion. The results they arrive at suit

one side only.

## THE FLOODS SEEM TO BE FALLING IN

the deluged district of the Mississippi

River. All the same it will be found

that hundreds and perhaps thousands of

unfortunate sufferers have had to aban-

don their homes, and in their cases, as

the waters subside, benevolence should

rise.

## EX-ASSEMBLYMAN DANIEL W. TAY-

LOR has recovered a verdict of \$20,-

000 against the New York *World* forlibel. If every one of the *World* has li-

beled something that amount, the big

Pulitzer building would never be

finished.

## MY FIDDLE.

My fiddle! Well, I kind of keep her handy,

don't you know?

Though I ain't so much inclined to tromp

the strings and switch the bow

As I was before the timber of my elbows

got so dry.

And my fingers was more timber-like and

caperish and spry.

Yet I can plunk and plunk and plunk

And turn her up and play

And just lean back and laugh and wink

At every rainy day.

My playin's only middlin'—times I picked

up a kind of sort of 'fiddle' the folks call

'contrabasso'.

The 'Old Fat Gal' and 'Ryestown' and

'My Sally' on the Sea

Is the 'contrabasso' that I saw when the

'diddle' is left to me.

And so I plunk and plunk and plunk

And turn her up and play

And just lean back and laugh and wink

At every rainy day.

That's how this dear old fiddle's won my

heart's enduring love!

From the strings across the middle to the

archin' up above—

From her spurs, over bridge, and to the

ribson 'round the throat,

She's a wood'n 'contrabasso, singin' 'Love

me' in every note!

And so I pat her neck and plunk

Her strings with lovin' hands,

And, bein' 'contrabasso, I sometimes think

She kind of understands!

—James Whitcomb Riley.